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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/085,462	02/28/2002	Tomohiro Koyata	7217/66559	1812
530	7590	04/07/2006	EXAMINER	
LERNER, DAVID, LITTENBERG, KRUMHOLZ & MENTLIK 600 SOUTH AVENUE WEST WESTFIELD, NJ 07090			BAYAT, BRADLEY B	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3621	

DATE MAILED: 04/07/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

Status of Claims

This communication is in response to amendment filed on January 13, 2006. Claims 1, 3-11 and 13-17 have been amended and 2 and 12 have been canceled. Claims 1, 3-11 and 13-17 remain pending.

Response to Arguments

Applicant has amended the claims to overcome the rejection based on Ginter. Applicant contends that the claimed subject matter is distinguishable from the cited reference since “the information or digital data of the claims is already stored in the storage medium and the apparatus makes inquiries as to whether the stored information has been legally purchased (response p. 11).” Applicant concedes that in “Ginter et al., the paragraph 0222 discloses the transmitting of inquiry information to an information center, the inquiry information being generated in association with digital data that has been recorded on a storage medium.” Id. Applicant then contends that “this is not the same as inquiring whether the information has been legally purchased or not, wherein the information is already in the storage medium.” Id. Accordingly, the applicant concludes that in light of the amendments to the claims, the distinguishing feature is “offering an additional service to a user by using encoded digital data that is already stored in the storage medium.” Id.

The examiner respectfully disagrees. Ginter discloses many variations to protecting, tracking, and distributing digital information via a VDE. Applicant’s feature is anticipated by the Ginter reference and is not novel in light of the art. For instance, in paragraph 0221 Ginter provides that such “information would be useful in tracking who may have “broken” the security

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of a VDE installation and was illegally making certain electronic content available to others. Fingerprinting may provide additional, available information such as time and/or date of the release (for example extraction) of said content information. Locations for inserting fingerprints may be specified by VDE installation and/or content container control information. This information may specify that certain areas and/or precise locations within properties should be used for fingerprinting, such as one or more certain fields of information or information types. Fingerprinting information may be incorporated into a property by modifying in a normally undetectable way color frequency and/or the brightness of certain image pixels, by slightly modifying certain audio signals as to frequency, by modifying font character formation, etc. Fingerprint information, itself, should be encrypted so as to make it particularly difficult for tampered fingerprints to be interpreted as valid. Variations in fingerprint locations for different copies of the same property; "false" fingerprint information; and multiple copies of fingerprint information within a specific property or other content which copies employ different fingerprinting techniques such as information distribution patterns, frequency and/or brightness manipulation, and encryption related techniques, are features of the present invention for increasing the difficulty of an unauthorized individual identifying fingerprint locations and erasing and/or modifying fingerprint information." As such, applicant's amendments fail to distinguish the claimed subject matter from the cited reference.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

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(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1, 3-11 and 13-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Ginter et al. (hereinafter Ginter), US 2004/0133793 A1.

As per the following claims, Ginter discloses:

1. A digital signal processing apparatus comprising:

-transmitting means for transmitting inquiry information to an information center over a communication line, said inquiry information being generated in association with encoded digital data which have been recorded on a storage medium [0008; 0221-222];

-receiving means for receiving a result of an inquiry conducted by said information center based on said inquiry information [0226-0240];

-discriminating means for judging, based on said result of said inquiry, whether said encoded digital data recorded on said storage medium are legally purchased data [1118, 1126, 1540, 1858, 1971-1975]; and

-controlling means which, if said discriminating means judges said encoded digital data to be legally purchased data, then executes a process to offer an additional service to said customer, wherein said additional service is offered to said customer by said controlling means by transmitting said encoded digital data from said storage medium to another storage medium [0057-0093, 0192, 0208, 0215-0222].

2. Canceled.

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3. A digital signal processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said additional service is offered to said customer by said controlling means converting said encoded digital data recorded on said storage medium with an algorithm of a predetermined version, into digital data having undergone encoding with an algorithm of a more advanced version, before replacing the unconverted digital data with the converted digital data on said storage medium [0965, 1478, 1511, 2017, 2280].

4. A digital signal processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said additional service is offered to said customer by said controlling means restoring said digital data having undergone said predetermined low bit rate coding process onto said storage medium [0186-0191, 2064].

5. A digital signal processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said additional service is offered to said customer by said controlling means converting said encoded digital data recorded on said storage medium into encoded digital data a different bit rate, before replacing the unconverted digital data with the converted digital data on said storage medium [2279-2321].

6. A digital signal processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said additional service offered to said customer comprises furnishing said customer, free of charge, with a product related to a producing party who produced said digital data purchased legally by said customer from said information center [0107-0141].

7. A digital signal processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising inputting means

for inputting identification information for identifying said encoded digital data which are subject to said inquiry; wherein said identification information input through said inputting means is transmitted to said information center over said communication line [0193-0229].

8. A digital signal processing apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said information center comprises: receiving means for receiving said inquiry information and said identification information for identifying said encoded digital data which are subject to said inquiry transmitted from said encoded digital signal processing apparatus; retrieving means for retrieving said digital data subject to said inquiry from said information center in association with said identification information for identifying said encoded digital data; reference inquiry information generating means for generating reference inquiry information in association with said encoded digital data retrieved by said retrieving means; comparing means for comparing said reference inquiry information generated by said reference inquiry information generating means with said inquiry information received by said receiving means; inquiry result generating means for generating an inquiry result based on a result of the comparison by said comparing means; and transmitting means for transmitting said inquiry result generated by said inquiry result generating means [0509, 0722].

9. A digital signal processing apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said reference inquiry information generating means subjects part of said encoded digital data retrieved by said retrieving means to an encoding process executed by a software encoder, the coded data part being compared with said inquiry information by said comparing means [1350-1814].

10. A digital signal processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising charging means for processing charges; wherein, if said discriminating means judges that said encoded digital data recorded on said storage medium are legally purchased data, then said charging means either charges nothing or a reduced amount to said customer for said additional service offered to said customer [0222-0272].

Claims 11, 13-17 are directed to a method of the above-recited apparatus and are similarly rejected.

Although the Examiner has pointed out particular references contained in the prior art(s) of record in the body of this action, the specified citations are merely representative of the teachings in the art as applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim. Since other passages and figures may apply to the claimed invention as well, it is respectfully requested that the applicant, in preparing the response, to consider fully the entire references as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior arts or disclosed by the examiner.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO

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MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:

- US 2002/0052849 A1 to McCutchen et al.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Bradley B. Bayat whose telephone number is 571-272-6704. The examiner can normally be reached on Tuesday - Friday 8 a.m.-6:30 p.m. and by email: bradley.bayat@uspto.gov.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, James Trammell can be reached regarding urgent matters at 571-272-6712.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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Any response to this action should be mailed to:

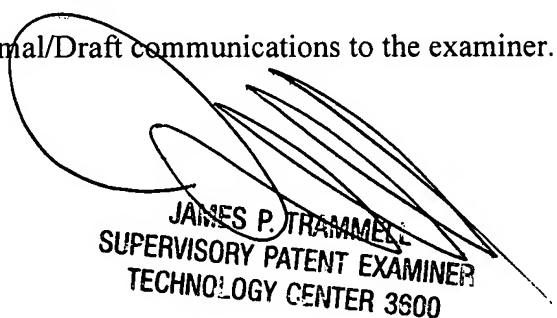
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Or faxed to:

(571) 273-8300 - Official communications; including After Final responses.

(571) 273-6704 - Informal/Draft communications to the examiner.

bbb



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